

Stranahan Stewardship Committee Meeting

March 17, 2014

Members Attending: Diana Batzel, Jim Brimblecombe, John Domey, Jenny Warshow. Ed Jalbert entered late.

Discussion: Diana brought a copy of last month's minutes to be approved. Jenny had one change request and then the members approved the minutes. Diana added that an agenda will be attached going forward, as that is something that is suppose to be posted for the public before each meeting is held.

Jim completed his task of asking the Town Clerk for minutes, letters of agreement, and contracts concerning the Stranahan Town Forest. Bobbi was kind enough to make copies of everything and Jenny brought them to the meeting. The Committee will keep the documents on hand to reference and continue to collect future ones.

Diana also completed her task of talking to Brett Engstrom about mapping the wetlands in the current stands to be logged. Brett had already walked the stands and determined the wetland areas. Ed had the information but unfortunately it never made it to the Committee. In conversation with Jenny and Diana, Brett offered to provide the mapping and help mark the areas in the spring.

Jenny had not yet recontacted the Vermont Land Trust in regards to supplying written information about the wetlands. (Later when Ed came, he said he had talked to the VLT but the information had not been passed on to the SSC.)

Jenny was discussing information carried over from our last meeting regarding bike trails when Ed arrived. There was some back tracking in conversation to bring Ed up to speed on current issues. The bike trails need to traverse as dry an area as possible; she had walked an area that could potentially meet this criteria. Part of the area ran through a pasture the Lights had once been interested in leasing. We were able to reference our newly acquired documents to see their interest dated back to 2009. The SSC agreed that we should contact the Lights and see if they still had any interest. Any further discussion of the bike trails would hinge on their reply. As the pasture option would be a lease, Ed asked if the bike organization would lease the land for trails. Jenny explained that they are not a formal organization with funding. Ed stated that he had two concerns; damage during mud season and the bikers going off the trails. Jenny volunteered to contact the Lights and depending on their reply, contact the biking individuals.

At this point Jenny needed to leave for another meeting but was delayed as conversation reverted back to the wetlands issue. Ed feels the area of wetlands is a grey area that needs to be addressed by the Select Board. He feels this even more strongly after having talked to the VLT. Diana commented that the Committee's role is to inform the Select Board regarding issues in the Stranahan

Forest and that they would probably not have any better expertise regarding wetlands than us. We also had not received any of the info the VLT had expressed to Ed but Diana felt the VLT and management plan are clear about treatment of wetland areas. Ed felt they need to be defined and mapped. Diana felt this would have to happen on an as needed basis due to the time it would take and also changes that occur such as recent flooding, land changes, or beavers. Ed did not agree that wetlands change much. Jenny asked if everyone could agree that we would trust Brett's expertise to guide us. Everyone felt confident in Brett to define and map the wetland areas. Diana pointed out that if we follow the procedure we detailed in the last meeting, the situation of having the trees marked before the wetlands are mapped and marked, should not happen again. Ed volunteered to try and re-estimate the amount of usable log product after we have marked the wetlands. He also talked about marking some of the boundaries while the snowshoeing is still good. Jenny felt it was important to do the road frontage on Hollister Hill and Eaton Cemetery. She also would like to have signage to mark entry and exit to the Forest, especially on the Pitkin end of the Thompson Road where the Town Forest ends before the road. John mentioned that VAST may have some signage or funds for signage that we might avail. Jenny said she would contact Gregg Fitch to see if that was a possibility.

Actions: Jenny will contact the Lights about the pasture and (if they are not interested) the bike club. She will also contact VAST regarding signage. Ed will look for Shape files to aid in boundary marking. He will also assemble old minutes and get them to the Town Clerk. Diana will get new minutes to Town Clerk for posting and assemble informal agreements and contracts into a summary.

Diana will not be at next meeting.

Next meeting April 21, 2014 @6:30 pm at the Old School House Commons

Agenda for next meeting: Report on actions, bike trails, boundary marking, and wetlands presentation.